

Media, language policy and cultural change in Tatarstan: Historic vs. pragmatic claims to nationhood

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Abstract

The politics of national identity in the Republic of Tatarstan are complex and often contradictory. Although sometimes posed in terms of an historical legacy, claims to nationhood are also strongly shaped by more pragmatic contemporary concerns. In addition to more conventional forms of political mobilisation, national identity is also contested in cultural arenas. Examining policies on language reform and media development, for example, sheds light on the processes through which a sense of national identity is currently being renegotiated in Tatarstan. The Republic's official multicultural policy is situated in the context of a range of distinct conceptions of Tatarstan's identity, from radical Islamic nationalism to a view of the republic as a Russian province.
